

Toddler

By **toddler** we mean a child from 1 year to 3 years of age. Thus, the toddler period lasts for 2 calendar years. It is a period of gradual independence of the child, who learns about the outside world through independent movement and improves communication with other people through the development of speech. ^[1]

Motor development

- gross motor development:
 - at 1 year - first imperfect independent steps;
 - at 13-15 months - independent walking (breaks free from free stance, walks a few steps, stops without holding on to anything);
 - after 15 months - more confident gait, rarely falls, can run, but on a wide base;
 - at 2 years - runs well, copes with uneven ground (crosses thresholds etc. without difficulty);
 - walking up stairs: initially climbs stairs; at around 1.5 years old, climbs stairs when led by hand; at 2 years old, climbs stairs without holding on, but usually with feet moving on each step; at 2.5 years old, climbs stairs with alternating feet; only at around 3 years old, goes down stairs;
 - around 2 years old can jump on the spot and likes to jump from low heights (from the last step, etc.); can jump with covering a certain distance until around 3 years old;
 - can usually ride a tricycle before the age of 3;
- development of fine motor skills:
 - by the end of the infant period he has a good grip on even very small objects, but dropping an object deliberately and accurately is difficult - dropping is more like throwing or throwing
 - after 1 year can drop objects better (more gently, in time) - e.g. able to stack 2 blocks on top of each other
 - at 1.5 years old can build a tower of blocks; at 2 years old can arrange blocks vertically and horizontally; at 3 years old can imitate a "bridge" of 3 blocks;
 - around 2 years old matches basic geometric shapes to the corresponding holes;
 - at age 3 can string beads on a string;
 - development of doodling: at first treats the pencil as with other objects (waves and taps it on the table); then begins to scribble on paper, but the strokes are random, rough, often overlapping the surface of the paper; around 1.5 years old, tries to imitate a line drawn by an adult, but so far without regard to direction; at 2 years old, imitates more faithfully (tries to keep the direction or imitate circular movements); around 3 years old, imitates a circle or cross only according to the pattern;
- dressing: around 1 year old starts to actively help with dressing (e.g. puts his hand through the set sleeve, puts his feet under his shoes); during the 3rd year he pulls on his shoes and undoes (and later fastens) the buttons; at the age of 3 he dresses with little help and can wash his hands;
- eating: at 15 months, he eats with a spoon (although he still turns it over); at 1.5 years, he is good with a cup and doesn't pick up too much when drinking;
- cleanliness: after 1 year, he cooperates by being put on the potty at the appropriate time (e.g. after waking up) but does not yet self-report his need; only at the end of 2 years does he self-report, but occasionally has to be reminded. ^[2]



Toddler

Development of speech

- there are great differences between children;
- speech comprehension (passive vocabulary) develops faster than expressive ability (active vocabulary) - at 13 months he may understand 20-100 words but only say a few words;
- speech development is slowed by a low stimulus environment, but also by frequent otitis media with conductive hearing loss;
- at 12 months the babbling phase peaks, then begins to use specific words to indicate objects and activities; first points to objects;
- at 16 months says 6 words, consonants t, d, v, n, h;
- at 18 months uses an average of 20-50 words;
- after 18 months there is rapid development of both passive and active vocabulary; child begins to understand the symbolic meaning of words;
- by the end of the 2nd year (18-24 months) begins to use verbs and says comprehensible sentences of 2 words, describing his/her activity ("I'm going out"); uses prepositions; begins to ask "why?"; begins to realize the time factor;
- at age 2 uses vowels correctly; approximately 270 words; uses pronouns;
- at 24-30 months says intelligible sentences of 3 words;
- at 3 years uses approximately 900 words; understandable sentences of 4 words;

- up to about 2 years of age, the child mostly refers to himself in the 3rd person (calls himself by his name) and only from the beginning of the 3rd year begins to speak in the 1st person ("I"). [3][2]

Psychosocial development

- walking allows the child to leave the mother and explore the environment, and this is the **beginning of independence and autonomy**; the toddler actively moves further away from the mother the older he gets; but if he is taken away from the mother by a stranger and is forcibly removed (e.g. If the separation lasts longer, there is a risk of delayed psychomotor development and disturbance of the foundations of the personality; the separation from the mother is better tolerated if the child remains in the accustomed environment of the home with people to whom he or she has become accustomed than if he or she is without the mother and in a strange environment;
- by walking independently, the child **becomes self-aware**;
- recognising himself in the mirror (visual self-knowledge): around 3 months he smiles and vocalises, then reaches for his image; around 1 year he looks questioningly behind the mirror as if looking for a real child, tries to hand a toy to his image; only around 2 years he starts to recognise himself (e.g. 2.5-3 years, they name their image with their name or "I"; they can recognise themselves in a photograph or video only at the age of 3;
- between 1. and 3. Year 2, gains independence and begins to realize that he/she can grab things or throw them away, hit things or pull back, give or take things to someone, come to someone or run away from someone, invite someone over or refuse them, and that his/her desire to move or possess things can be thwarted by a parent, this sometimes leads to violent enforcement ("I want") or rejection ("I want") - this whole period is therefore referred to as the *defiance phase* or the *negativity phase* ("no") - the greater the child's vocabulary and the better he or she is able to communicate verbally, the more likely this defiance is expressed in words; children with slower speech development tend to protest more directly (more aggressively); this period requires a calm, understanding and tolerant but consistent educational approach; it is advisable to divert attention elsewhere, to engage the child in something interesting, to emphasise his good qualities, to ask for his help and cooperation, etc. It is important to leave sufficient room for autonomy and independence within fixed boundaries;
- the second year of life is characterised by educational problems - the child is forming an idea of what of his environment he can conquer - parents should not prevent him, but should set limits and protect him from risks;
- although still highly dependent on the mother between the first and third years, the child gradually expands his/her range of social relationships, especially within the extended family; short periods when the mother is away are better tolerated if other family members are present;
- Around 2 years of age, begins to establish relationships with other children of the same age - so far only brief exchanges of attention, tugging at things, handing a toy or making clumsy attempts to calm another child; **parallel play** emerges and only in the 3rd year does play begin to take on a cooperative or competitive character;
- **begins to perceive the feelings of others** (the basis of empathy) - wants to comfort someone who is sad; begins to understand the feelings of another child who has been hit, through this begins to control his own aggression;
- the toddler period is crucial for the acquisition of prosocial (altruistic) behaviour - knowing how to help, comfort, make happy;
- begins to understand right and wrong, perceives parents' expectations; awareness of wrongdoing can lead to an anxiety reaction;
- jealous at the birth of a younger sibling - between 12-18 months, he/she does not tolerate the mother's departure for the maternity hospital well; after her return, he/she requires the same care and attention as before the birth of the sibling; a two-year-old child consciously experiences "dethronement" if he/she receives less attention after the birth of a sibling; explanations of the baby's arrival into the world are incomprehensible to him/her; it is appropriate if the toddler helps in caring for the newborn (brings, feeds, ..); only at 3-4 years of age is he intellectually better prepared for the arrival of a sibling;
- according to **Sigmund Freud** this is the **anal stage** - the main task is to control defecation; Freud judges that control of defecation leads to diligence, reliability and conscientiousness;
- according to **Jean Piaget**, the development of sensorimotor intelligence ends at 1.5-2 years and the **stage of symbolic and preconceptual thinking begins** (lasts from about 2 to 4 years) - the child uses words only as "preconceptions" for now rather than actual concepts; "preconceptions" are based on secondary, irrelevant features. [2][3]

Development of the central nervous system

- myelination is completed;
- all layers of the cerebral cortex reach a synchronous state of maturation between 15-24 months of age - this is a prerequisite for training to maintain clarity after 18 months of age;
- toddlers can perceive a filled rectum and bladder and are physically able to control the rectal sphincter - positive motivation and a sensitive approach are important during training. [3]

Childhood growth spurt

- A period of stable growth between the dynamic growth periods of infantile and pubertal growth;
- after the first year of life, the genetic growth potential and the action of growth hormone, which controls IGF-I secretion, begins to take effect;
- by 2 years of age, a healthy child's height reaches a percentile that is predetermined by the growth potential

inherited from his or her parents and then grows along this percentile throughout childhood - slow growth is called "lag-down growth" (e.g., a large newborn of small parents), fast growth is called "catch-up growth" (e.g., a small newborn of tall parents);

- during the first two years of life, the baby grows rapidly, and then the growth rate decreases slightly - in the first year the baby grows 25-30 cm, in the second year about 12 cm, and then at least 5 cm per year;
 - girls reach half of their future adult height at 1.5 years and boys at 2 years;
 - children with intrauterine growth retardation (IUGR) may have physiological catch-up growth in the first 3 months of life; if IUGR began before 26 weeks gestation, catch-up growth in height and brain size usually does not occur.^[3]
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- in the 12th-18th month, the greater fontanelle closes
 - the eruption of milk teeth ends.^[4]

Nutrition

 For more information see *Toddler Nutrition*.

Proper nutrition is essential for optimal somatic and psychomotor development of the child. During this period, the programming of the body's metabolism and the formation of the child's relationship with nutrition and eating habits occurs. The goal is to teach the child to eat with gusto, in adequate quantities, independently, at the table with the family. Toddlers are often afraid to taste new foods and dishes and are picky eaters. It is not possible to force them to eat, it is better to repeatedly and non-violently offer rejected foods. Inappropriate educational methods can cause a negative attitude towards food and eating habits (feeding while watching TV or moving, overeating, giving sugary drinks and sweets).^[5]

Toddlers initially drink from a bottle, are spoon-fed and eat solid food independently with their hands. Later, they drink independently from a cup and eat with a spoon. Toddlers' diets should be varied, balanced, physically varied, of different consistencies and interestingly varied in appearance. It should be served in at least 5 portions per day, due to the small capacity of the stomach. Toddlers should not be fed small solid and difficult to dissolve foods (nuts, lentils, candied fruit) because of the risk of aspiration. The recommended energy value of the diet is 100 kcal/kg/day, lower according to other recommendations.^[5]

After 1 year of age, 300-330 ml of milk per day is recommended, after 2 years at least 125 ml. Until 2 years of age, whole, pasteurized milk is given, or special powdered milk for toddlers, enriched with vitamins, trace elements, etc. The recommended daily fluid volume is 80-120 ml/kg/day in the 2nd year and 80-100 ml/kg/day in the 3rd year. In addition to milk, water and unsweetened baby teas are suitable. Fruit juices and juices should not exceed 120-150 ml/day. ^[5]

References

Related entries

- Childhood age distribution: Newborn ■ Infant ■ Preschooler ■ School-age ■ Adolescent
- Child psychomotor development ■ Child neuromotor development ■ Child psychosocial development ■ Child growth and development
- Child Nutrition

References

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External links

- Batole (Czech Wikipedia)
- Toddler (English Wikipedia)